

Statement by BRA Board Chairman Robert L. Farrell

September 22, 1983

In the past several months there has been increasing public discussion of the so-called "linkage" concept, or more specifically, the question of how the city can insure that the benefits of downtown development can be shared with the neighborhoods.

Last June, Mayor White established a committee, consisting of private citizens and public officials, to look at this aspect of development policy. The "Linkage" Committee has been meeting regularly since then and is expected to submit a report and recommendations to the Mayor in the near future.

The BRA Board, in its capacity as the city planning agency, wishes, with this statement, to articulate its policy on this matter of "linkage".

We should begin by noting that the BRA has encouraged and supported---and in some cases, initiated---the linkage concept long before the word linkage became popular.

On numerous occasions, we have entered into agreements with institutions concerning in lieu tax payments. Some of these agreements have resulted in those institutions providing direct scholarship aid or medical services to residents of Boston's neighborhoods. That, in one form, amounts to linkage in that direct benefits went to neighborhood residents as a result of new development.

In other instances, we have prevailed on developers, through clauses in land disposition agreements or by vote of this Board, to provide certain public amenities as a condition of designation. This has provided the city with public amenities, such as street improvements and public open space.

The BRA has also followed through on the broad outlines of the Mayor's policy decision, dating back to 1979, concerning the resident job program and payback of UDAG funds. Thus, in approving projects, such as Copley Place or the Teradyne expansion, or even the North End Nursing home or the Westland Avenue apartments, the BRA has required these developers to recruit and hire Boston residents and to repay with interest the UDAG loans provided them by the city. Those UDAG payback funds will be used to underwrite new development in our neighborhoods.

Recently, we have voted that a portion of the lease payment to be received from the Rowes-Fosters Wharf development be set aside for housing development in our urban renewal areas. This will amount to \$500,000 each year. In addition, the designated developer of Parcel 7---by vote of this Board---

will make a \$2 million payment to the Neighborhood Housing Trust. And the designated developer of the Arlington-Hadassah parcel in the Park Plaza project will be required to make a \$600,000 contribution to the Housing Partnership.

In short, the BRA for some time has followed a policy aimed at sharing the benefits of downtown development with our neighborhoods. We are committed to follow a process whereby the benefits of new investment are used to provide new and rehabilitated housing in our neighborhoods to foster the revitalization of our neighborhood business districts.

If there is any question about our practice, I intend to submit a resolution to the Board at our next meeting, in which I will ask the Board to adopt the 'linkage' concept as the established policy of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and that the Authority establish a mechanism for implementing that policy with the Linkage Committee.

